Methadone deaths, 1999-2005
Findings from the National Vital Statistics System

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Presentation Overview

- National methadone poisoning mortality in perspective
- Data source
- Methadone-related poisoning deaths
  - Trends
  - Demographic characteristics
  - Regional variation
- Next steps for national surveillance
Trends in leading mechanisms of injury death: 1968-2005

- MVT
- Firearms
- Poisoning
Poisoning deaths mentioning methadone, cocaine, heroin, 1999-2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Where do the data come from?

Death certificates, which:

- Form the basis for the national mortality statistics
- Describe the chain of events leading to the death using narrative text entered into the cause-of-death section of the death certificate
- Code causes of death using the *International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision* (ICD-10)
### CAUSE OF DEATH (See instructions and examples)

32. **PART I. Enter the chain of events -- diseases, injuries, or complications -- that directly caused the death.** DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.

**IMMEDIATE CAUSE** (Final disease or condition resulting in death)

- a. Due to (or as a consequence of):
- b. Due to (or as a consequence of):
- c. Due to (or as a consequence of):
- d. Due to (or as a consequence of):

**PART II. Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.**

- a. Due to (or as a consequence of):
- b. Due to (or as a consequence of):
- c. Due to (or as a consequence of):

**33. WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED?**
- Yes
- No

**35. DID TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTE TO DEATH?**
- Yes
- Probably
- No
- Unknown

**36. IF FEMALE:**
- Not pregnant within past year
- Pregnant at time of death
- Not pregnant but pregnant within 42 days of death
- Not pregnant but pregnant 43 days to 1 year before death
- Unknown if pregnant within the past year

**38. DATE OF INJURY**
(Mo/Day/Yr)(Spell Month)

**39. TIME OF INJURY**

**40. PLACE OF INJURY** (e.g., Decedent’s home, construction site, restaurant, wooded area)

- Site, restaurant, wooded area

**41. INJURY AT WORK?**
- Yes
- No

**42. LOCATION OF INJURY:**
- State:
- City or Town:
- Street & Number:
- Apartment No.
- Zip Code:

**43. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED**

**44. IF TRANSPORTATION INJURY, SPECIFY**
- Driver/Operator
- Passenger
- Pedestrian
- Other (Specify)

### Other contributing conditions

**33. WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED?**
- Yes
- No

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- Probably
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- Unknown

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Poisoning deaths with and without mention of methadone: 1999-2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Percent distribution of all methadone deaths by cause and intent: 2005

- **Unintentional poisoning**: 80%
- **Suicide poisoning**: 5%
- **Undetermined intent poisoning**: 11%
- **Other injury deaths**: 1%
- **Noninjury deaths**: 3%

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Methadone deaths by underlying cause and intent: 1999-2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Age-specific methadone death rates: 1999-2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Methadone poisoning deaths by age, 2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Methadone poisoning death rates by age and sex: 2004-2005

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Methadone death rates by state, 2003–2005

Deaths per 100,000 population

- Figure unreliable*
- 0.4–0.9
- 1.0–1.9
- 2.0–4.3

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision
Methadone poisoning deaths, 2005

Place of poisoning
- 70 % At home
- 5 % Trade/service areas (including hotels)
- 23 % Unspecified place

Place of death
- 58 % At home
- 15 % Outpatient or emergency department
- 5 % Other medical (e.g. inpatient, nursing home)
- 5 % Dead on arrival
Next steps for us:
Getting more information from the death certificate

- Currently, we use ICD-10 coded data from death certificate
- Developing methods to use literal text from death certificate
Narcotic substances mentioned in poisoning deaths: 1999-2005

What are the specific narcotics mentioned? Morphine, oxycodone, fentanyl, others??

Source: NCHS, data from the National Vital Statistics System
Published findings can be found on the National Center for Health Statistics website under Health E-stats.

*Increases in Poisoning and Methadone-Related Deaths: United States, 1999-2005*
by Lois A. Fingerhut, M.A.
Thank you

For more information on injury data and resources from NCHS, see: www.cdc.gov/nchs/injury.htm.

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